

The Georgia Commission on Family Violence (GCFV) will soon host its 20th Annual Statewide Family Violence Conference. On September 28-October 1, judges, law enforcement, family violence intervention providers, faith community, prosecutors, and community members will descend on Jekyll Island, GA, to be part of the solution to family violence in Georgia.



The GCFV was created by legislation in 1992 for the purpose of developing a comprehensive plan for ending domestic violence in Georgia. According to the December 1992 *Georgia Courts Journal*, the idea for a family violence commission was recommended by the Commission on Gender Bias in the Judicial System. The Gender Bias report said that police, prosecutors, and judges often have gender-biased attitudes about domestic violence including the belief a man should be able to control his wife and punish her. "Police frequently undercharge the batterer. In addition, the report revealed that prosecutors often give low priority to domestic violence cases as do many courts." Tasks for the new commission included establishing Community Task Forces on Family Violence in each judicial circuit and reporting annually to the Georgia General Assembly.

Gov. Zell Miller appointed the commission's first members on November 2, 1992, including judges from each judicial district in the state, AOC staff, and others from stakeholder groups. In February 1994, GCFV issued its first report.

It was believed that the commission would terminate after six years. Twenty-two years later, the Georgia Commission on Family Violence continues to provide training, support and license Family Violence Intervention Programs, establish Family Violence Task Forces throughout the state, study domestic violence trends nationally and statewide, and publish vital information on domestic violence.

Annual Statewide Family Violence Conference

In 1994, a dinner was held at the First Presbyterian Church in Atlanta with Commission members and representative from the task forces. The first formal conference was held in 1995 at the A.L. Burruss building at Kennesaw State College (now University) with 100 participants.

Over the years, the conference has grown to as many 300 attendees and has been hosted in various cities throughout the state to allow stakeholders the chance to attend.

Publications

Annual Report. The GCFV reports its activities each year in an Annual Report to the Georgia General Assembly.

Fatality Review. Since 2004 the GCFV has collaborated with the Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence to publish an annual *Fatality Review*. The Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review Project operates under grants awarded by Georgia's Criminal Justice Coordinating Council with funding from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women.

A goal of this project is to reduce domestic violence-related fatalities by using information learned from past fatalities. Each Annual Report builds on the last and contains data and analysis related to the year just prior to the published report.

Georgia State Plan for Ending Domestic Violence. In 2012, the GCFV published the *Georgia State Plan for Ending Domestic Violence*

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Plan

was the culmination of 18 months of work by the GCFV's strategic planning committee and working groups to produce a plan to end domestic violence in Georgia. The

Plan

offers a broad framework for agencies and policymakers to set priorities and select strategies for ending family violence.

2014 Conference

The 20th Annual Conference will look back over the past 20 years of work on domestic violence in Georgia. The theme of the conference is "Reflecting, Refocusing and Rejuvenating: 20 years of

Domestic Violence in Georgia." The keynote speakers for this year's conference are Jill Davies, Deputy Director, Greater Hartford Legal Aid, Inc; Ulester Douglas, Interim Executive Director, Men Stopping Violence; and Casey Gwinn, President and Co-Founder, Family Justice Center Alliance. Mr. Gwinn was one of the first keynote speakers for the Annual Conference.

Registration for the 2014 conference opened on May 19. Early bird registration is open through June 16. Go to <http://bit.ly/1mhuerN> for more registration information.